

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-5, 9, 13, 15, 16, and 17-20 are presently pending in this application. Claims 1, 3-5, 9, 13, 15 and 16 have been amended to clarify certain features to expedite prosecution of this application, and without prejudice to pursuing claims in unamended or other forms in a continuation or other application. Claims 2, 6-8, 10-12, and 14 have been cancelled without prejudice to pursuing these claims in a continuation or other application. New claims 17-20 have also been added.

In the Office Action mailed August 21, 2007, claims 1-16 were rejected. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Published U.S. Patent Application No. 2001/0043799 to Okada ("Okada") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,792,000 to Morinaga ("Morinaga");

(B) Claims 9, 10, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Morinaga, and in further view of Published U.S. Patent Application No. 2001/0016432 to Yamauchi ("Yamauchi");

(C) Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada, Morinaga, and Yamauchi, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,597,862 to Saeki ("Saeki"); and

(D) Claims 14-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada, Morinaga, and Yamauchi, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,150,925 to Casazza ("Casazza").

As a preliminary matter, the undersigned representative wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in a telephone interview on October 31, 2007 to discuss the present Office Action, the Okada and Morinaga references, and the pending claims. The applicant requests that this paper constitute the applicant's Interview Summary. If the Examiner notices any deficiencies in this regard, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative.

The following remarks summarize and expand upon the results of the October 31st telephone interview, and they also reflect the agreements reached between the undersigned representative and the Examiner during the telephone interview. For example, the following remarks reflect the Examiner's acknowledgement that amending claim 1 to feature a playing device configured to engage with two or more modular components, a first modular component having a reading and/or writing device, and a second modular having a memory that stores an encoding and/or decoding program, would distinguish this claim over the combination of Okada and Morinaga. Claim 1 has been so amended and, accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom should be withdrawn.

A. Response to the Section 103(a) Rejection of Claims 1-8 (Okada and Morinaga)

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Morinaga. Claims 2 and 6-8 have been cancelled and, accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of these claims is now moot.

As stated above, claim 1 has been amended in accordance with the agreements reached between the Examiner and the undersigned representative during the October 31st telephone interview and, therefore, the Section 103 rejection of this claim should be withdrawn. Claims 3-5 depend from allowable claim 1 and, accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of these claims should be withdrawn for at least the foregoing reasons, and for the additional features of these claims.

B. Response to the Section 103(a) Rejection of Claims 9, 10, 12, and 13 (Okada, Morinaga, and Yamauchi)

Claims 9, 10, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Morinaga, and in further view of Yamauchi. Claims 10 and 12 have been cancelled and, accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of these claims is now moot.

Claims 9 and 13 depend from allowable claim 1. Yamauchi is relied on in the Office Action for disclosing detachable boxes that can be stacked upon one another. Even assuming for the sake of argument that this is correct, Yamauchi fails to cure the

above-noted deficiencies of Okada and Morinaga, and therefore fail to support a Section 103 rejection of claim 1. Accordingly, dependent claims 9 and 13 are allowable over the combination of Okada, Morinaga, and Yamauchi for at least the reason that these references, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the features of claim 1, and the additional features of claims 9 and 13. Therefore, the Section 103 rejection of claims 9 and 13 should be withdrawn.

C. Response to the Section 103(a) Rejection of Claim 11 (Okada, Morinaga, Yamauchi, and Saeki)

Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada, Morinaga, and Yamauchi, and in further view of Saeki. Claim 11 has been cancelled and, accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of this claim is now moot.

D. Response to the Section 103(a) Rejection of Claims 14-16 (Okada, Morinaga, Yamauchi, and Casazza)

Claims 14-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada, Morinaga, and Yamauchi, and in further view of Casazza. Claim 14 has been cancelled and, accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of this claim is now moot.

Claims 15 and 16 depend from allowable claim 1. Yamauchi and Casazza are relied on in the Office Action for disclosing, respectively, detachable boxes that can be stacked upon one another and industrial transmission connections with the detachable boxes. Even assuming for the sake of argument that this is correct, Yamauchi and Casazza fail to cure the above-noted deficiencies of Okada and Morinaga, and therefore fail to support a Section 103 rejection of claim 1. Accordingly, dependent claims 15 and 16 are allowable over the combination of Okada, Morinaga, Yamauchi, and Casazza for at least the reason that these references, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the features of claim 1, and the additional features of claims 15 and 16. Therefore, the Section 103 rejection of claims 15 and 16 should be withdrawn.

E. New Claims 17-20


New claims 17-20 have been added to the present application. The subject matter of these claims is supported by the figures and text of the original application. Accordingly, these claims do not add any new matter to the application and are fully supported under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. New claim 17 includes features similar to those of claim 1. For example, claim 17 includes, *inter alia*, a first modular component with means for optically reading from and/or writing to optical media and a second modular component with means for storing an encoding and/or decoding program. Claim 17 also includes a playing unit configured to engage with the first and second modular components. Accordingly, claim 17 is allowable over the applied references for the reasons explained above with respect to claim 1 and for the additional features of claim 17. Claims 18-20 depend from claim 17 and are also allowable, for at least the foregoing reasons, and for the additional features of these claims.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the applied art. The applicant accordingly requests reconsideration of the application and a mailing of a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact John G. Tolomei at (206) 359-8140.

Respectfully submitted,
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